

Thus one extreme proposition is out of the way. My friend from Kent, [Mr. Chambers,] must excuse me for saying that his proposition was another extreme. That, too, has been voted down, by a considerable majority, and I think, properly. I believe that its adoption here would have defeated the purpose of this Convention, which is, to make a Constitution generally acceptable to the people of the State. After all the agitation that has prevailed since November last, I consider it certain, that no Constitution will be accepted which does not make some material change in the apportionment. And whatever was my opinion originally, as to the necessity of calling a Convention, I have no hesitation in saying, that it is due to the State, that it is due to ourselves, that we should strive to the utmost of our power to make such a Constitution as we think will prove acceptable to the people. I intend faithfully to perform that duty, to the best of my ability.

Now, the proposition of the gentleman from Kent, if adopted, would, in my opinion, defeat the new Constitution, whatever it might be in other respects. Then, the whole question of reform, and especially this question of representation, would be open for re-agitation; and in that case, I have little doubt, that but few years would pass before another Convention would be called. Thus a middle ground, a place of mutual concession, of fair compromise, is alone left for us to occupy. I believe that such an adjustment may now be made, as will satisfy that part of the State which demands an increase of political power, without really injuring the rest. What the exact plan is, it may be hard to define just yet; it may develop itself in the course of our proceedings.

There are several propositions now before us, Mr. President. Some features of the Washington county plan, [Mr. Fiery's,] I certainly do not like. The sections offered by my venerable colleague, [Mr. Dorsey,] and by my other respected colleague, [Mr. Randall,] each of which gives Baltimore city ten delegates out of eighty-three, are satisfactory to myself. I had myself, some days since, drawn up a plan very nearly corresponding with theirs, giving Baltimore ten out of eighty-one. In my own proposition, I have stated no basis of numbers, wealth, or territory; but have merely apportioned the delegates among the different counties and the city of Baltimore, so many to each. Of course, the distribution is based upon certain elements, although it appears arbitrary on its face. It seems to me better that no particular principle or rule of apportionment should be announced, because it may create difficulty hereafter, or be found injurious in some future application. Population is certainly one of those elements, wealth is another, and territory another; but besides these, there are old habits, associations, feelings, and even prejudices which in my opinion are worthy of consideration, and which have been considered by me in the distribution of political power. In such a matter I do not desire to forget the history of the

State; for that history I esteem a substantial thing.

I have all due respect for the framers of the various plans which have been presented; but I must be permitted to say, that the minute calculations that have been made, the balancing of fraction against fraction, and the reduplication of ratios, have rather amused than instructed me. I am as fond of arithmetic as most other men, and have sometimes been influenced by its fascination, but in this case I think there has been a great waste of cyphering. The exact elements composing the adjustment of such a question cannot well be separately stated, nor their relative proportions precisely defined.

What I have said of these plans, Mr. President, may give a general idea of the course I shall pursue. I believe that some proposition not widely differing from those of my two colleagues and myself would meet with general acquiescence in the State at large, including the city of Baltimore, where the greatest interest is felt in this question. I am determined, as far as my vote is concerned, that some such settlement shall be made; if not exactly in the shape I prefer, then in the nearest approach to it which can be obtained. That I consider my duty. When I say that such an arrangement would, at this time be satisfactory to the city of Baltimore, I do not mean that it would be satisfactory to all her delegates in this Convention. They present a broken phalanx; they are even at war with each other. I refer to the mass of intelligent citizens, both in Baltimore and the State at large. By such a compromise as I have indicated, the pride of the city is saved, and no injury is done to the interests of the counties.

It is, indeed, more a matter of pride than interest to Baltimore herself, that some increase of representation should be granted to her. I do not believe, that with ten members she would have more actual strength in the House of Delegates, than she now has. The larger her representation, so long as she cannot secure anything like a majority, the more surely will she excite the jealousy of the counties, and combinations will be formed against her; so that great measures for her benefit may be defeated which under the present apportionment could be carried on their own merits. Besides, the greater the number of her delegates, the poorer will be their quality, and the less influence will they possess individually upon the body of which they will form a part. It is well known to all who have been in our State Legislatures, that the delegation of Baltimore, now composed of five, is not generally one of the ablest in the House. There are sometimes individual exceptions, but I speak of what is generally recognised as a fact. Now, if Baltimore has ten, or twenty, or twenty-four delegates—and so many are proposed by one of her delegates here, (Mr. Brent)—they will probably be much inferior to those she has heretofore sent. If the honor is made so much cheaper, there will be a cheaper set of delegates. We have good reason, too, for anticipating, that